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COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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II. PROGRAMME OF MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN CONNEXION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Preliminary consideration of the Programme of Measures and Activities

15. The Committee devoted ___ plenary meetings to an examination of item 4 of its agenda, "Programme of Measures and Activities to be Undertaken in Connexion with the International Year for Human Rights".

16. At its first meeting, held on 9 June 1964, the Committee had before it a note by the Secretary-General (ST/SG/AC.5/2) summarizing the action which had been taken by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights with regard to the designation of 1968 as International Year for Human Rights. At that meeting the Committee decided, after some discussion of the organization of its work, that the Chairman, in collaboration with the other officers of the Committee and with the assistance of the Secretariat, should prepare some guiding principles for the Committee's work and suggest specific proposals for consideration at future meetings.

17. At the Committee's second meeting, held on 7 July 1964, the Chairman presented a working paper (ST/SG/AC.5/3 and Corr.1) which he had drafted in collaboration with the other officers of the Committee and with the assistance of the Secretariat, following the decision which had been taken by the Committee. In this connexion the First Vice-Chairman, in his capacity as a member of the Bureau, pointed out that the working paper, as submitted, did not reflect either the unanimous views or a consensus of the officers of the Committee.

18. The working paper opened with an analysis of the terms of reference of the Committee, and suggested that it should consider its programme of work and draw up its report under the following main headings:

I. A programme of observances and activities to be carried out during International Year for Human Rights on Human Rights Day 1968 by inter-governmental organizations, Governments, and non-governmental organizations;

II. Conclusions as to the possibility that an international conference on human rights might be held in 1968 to review progress in the field of human rights; and

III. Suggestions for intensification of national and international efforts in the field of human rights during the period up to 1968.

Under these headings, there were some suggestions on a programme of measures and activities to be undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights.

19. The Committee devoted its second to fifth meetings to a preliminary discussion of the contents of the working paper. The proposals which it set out were characterized by some members of the Committee as comprehensive, constructive, and directed towards concrete and realistic possibilities. The opinion was expressed that the paper provided a useful starting point for the Committee's work. It was, however, regretted that unanimity of views had not been achieved on certain items, and that the working paper therefore only partially fulfilled its purpose.

20. The working paper recommended (paras. 13-14) that a series of subjects dealing with particular aspects of human rights should be selected and continuing attention focussed on each of these subjects throughout a particular period of the International Year for Human Rights. A series of twelve subjects was presented. Various members of the Committee pointed out that the list of rights to be accorded priority was incomplete, and that there was no ground for according certain rights priority over others.

21. The working paper dealt briefly (paras. 16-18) with national and international measures for the effective implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and expressed the view that if by the beginning of the International Year for Human Rights the draft Covenants on human rights, including measures for their

effective implementation, had not been completed, an international effort towards the provision of effective implementation should form part of the celebration of the Year, including consultation with Member States on the establishment or activation of international or regional organs to which every natural person, every duly constituted group of individuals and every recognized non-governmental organization could bring their complaints of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, the recommendation that proposals relating to implementation of human rights should be considered by the Committee was not unanimous; some members strongly objected to any consideration by the Committee of such proposals.

23. There also was a difference of opinion in the Committee on the question whether proposals relating to implementation should be included in programmes for the observance of the International Year for Human Rights. Some members supported the idea and suggested that the Committee should try to accelerate the elaboration of such measures in the case not only of the two draft Covenants but also of other international instruments relating to human rights. Others, however, felt that the Committee should not deal with measures of implementation, as the subject was highly controversial and was to be taken up by the General Assembly.

24. The working paper contained (paras. 19-27) a series of suggestions and recommendations concerning programmes to be undertaken, in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights, by inter-governmental organizations, specialized agencies, States Members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies, and interested international and national non-governmental organizations. In connexion with these suggestions one member of the Bureau had expressed the opinion that the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should encompass all States. Some members of the Committee supported this opinion, while others preferred the wording, "States Members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies", used in the working paper. Some members of the Committee expressed the view that all organizations of the world, not only those referred to in the working paper, should take part in the celebration; however, these members felt that the Committee should not have endeavoured to suggest a programme of activities to such organizations. The consensus in the Committee was that detailed examination of the suggestions and

proposals in the working paper should be postponed until the comments of interested States, agencies, and organizations could be obtained and made available.

25. The working paper also contained (Part II) suggestions with regard to the proposed international conference on human rights. In this connexion it was pointed out that the Committee might wish to have the benefit of the views of Member States concerning the possibility that a conference of the kind contemplated might be held. Some members of the Committee warmly endorsed the idea of holding an international conference on human rights in 1968, in view of its potential usefulness in reviewing and evaluating the progress made in this field and exchanging ideas on future measures. Other members, however, had reservations with regard to the desirability of holding such a conference, and proposed various alternative possibilities. One member expressed the view that the purposes envisaged for the conference might be better served by intensifying existing programmes of seminars, institutes and fellowships. Another suggested that instead of an international conference it might be more appropriate to devote the three regional seminars to be held in 1968 to the international year. Others favoured use of part of the regular session of the General Assembly for the purposes of the conference. In the view of a number of members it was essential to examine more closely the benefits that could be expected from the proposed conference and to weigh its financial implications in view of the limited resources of the United Nations. There was general agreement with the suggestion in the working paper, that the Committee should have the benefit of views of Member States before proceeding further with the discussion.

26. In addition, the working paper contained (Part III) a series of suggestions for the intensification of national efforts in the field of human rights during the period up to 1968.

27. Each of the suggestions put forward by the Working Group was endorsed by some members of the Committee, but in each case reservations were expressed by some others. The prevailing view was that it was premature to examine the suggestions in detail until the comments of Governments could be obtained and made available. Some members felt that even then it would be too early to establish a definitive programme for the full period up to 1968, as it was possible that nearer to that year particular subjects might seem to require special study and publicity, or even that different priorities might be required in the light of changing circumstances.

28. One member of the Committee proposed that the Secretariat should produce, in collaboration with the specialized agencies concerned, a report on the situation of human rights in the world in 1967, reviewing efforts to promote respect for and observance of human rights by individual countries and the progress achieved in the period 1945-1967, briefly outlining and evaluating the work of the United Nations in the field of human rights, and suggesting any changes in method, organization and administration that appeared desirable in the light of experience.

29. Another member suggested that the list of proposals in the working paper should be supplemented by the addition of the following points: the achievement of substantial progress, in each country in particular and in all countries in general, in the observance and development of human rights and fundamental freedoms; the elimination of such violations of human rights and of the freedoms of the human person as apartheid, fascism, neo-fascism and militarism; the intensification of efforts to ensure the exercise of economic and social rights in countries where it is not guaranteed; and the strengthening of United Nations activity in the field of human rights and its concentration on certain aspects of those rights.

30. In the course of the discussion the Committee heard statements by the representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

31. At its fifth meeting the Committee, having completed a preliminary discussion of the working paper submitted by the Chairman in collaboration with the other officers, considered a draft resolution (ST/SG/AC.5/L.1) submitted jointly by Argentina, Ghana, the Netherlands and Uganda, and unanimously decided to request the Secretary-General to invite the States Members of the United Nations and of its specialized agencies, the specialized agencies, and the interested non-governmental organizations having consultative status to submit, not later than 15 September 1964, their suggestions and proposals for the programme of measures and activities to be undertaken in connexion with the International Year for Human Rights; and to communicate to them for their information the working paper referred to above and the summary records of the Committee's meetings (ST/SG/AC.5/SR.1-5). The Chairman was requested, in collaboration with the Secretary-General, to arrange for a further

series of meetings of the Committee to be held at the earliest convenient time after 15 September 1964.

32. Although the decision referred to above was adopted unanimously, the reservation was made by some members of the Committee that it violated the principle of the universality of the United Nations and that by excluding a large number of States from the activities connected with the International Year for Human Rights, the Committee distorted the very concept of such a year.

33. At its sixth to ninth meetings, held during the period 19-21 October 1964, the Committee continued the general debate on the working paper (ST/SG/AC.5/3), taking into account the observations from Governments, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations (ST/SG/AC.5/4 and Adds.1-10) which had been received by the Secretary-General in response to the invitation referred to in the resolution adopted by the Committee at its fifth meeting. Observations were received from the Governments of the following countries: Argentina, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Ceylon, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Iran, Italy, Laos, Liberia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Poland, Senegal, Turkey, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Viet-Nam. Observations were also received from the following specialized agencies: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, observations were received from the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status:

CATEGORY A

World Veterans Federation

CATEGORY B

Afro-Asian Organization for Economic Co-operation
All India Women's Conference (India)
Associated Country Women of the World

CATEGORY B (continued)

Catholic International Union for Social Service
Consultative Council of Jewish Organizations
Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations
International Abolitionist Federation
International Conference of Catholic Charities
International Federation of Women Lawyers
International League for the Rights of Man
Nouvelles Equipes Internationales - International Union of Christian Democrats
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations
World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession

REGISTER

International Council of Social Democratic Women
International Federation of Senior Police Officers
Open Door International (for the Economic Emancipation of the Women Workers)
Universal Esperanto Association
World University Service

34. The Committee agreed that members wishing to do so should make general statements on the working paper which had been prepared by the Chairman in collaboration with the other officers (ST/SG/AC.5/3) and the observations thereon received from Governments, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations; that the Chairman would then appoint a working group to sort out the various proposals made and to define areas of agreement and disagreement; and that the Committee would then make its final recommendations after discussing the working group's report.

35. The general statements, made at the seventh to ninth meetings, related for the most part to matters which had been the subject of earlier discussion, such as (1) whether the programme to be recommended should emphasize one or more rights or should cover all the rights and freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (2) whether the question of implementation of human rights should be dealt with in the context of programmes for the International Year for Human Rights,

(3) whether there should be an international conference on human rights in 1968 or a series of seminars, or both, and (4) how education could be used to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

36. With reference to the first question, two points of view were expressed. One was that special attention should be given, during the International Year for Human Rights, to freedom of information, equality before the law, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom from racial discrimination. The other was that if attention was to be concentrated exclusively on a series of definite subjects, the importance of the over-all goal - the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - might be lost from sight.

37. With reference to the second question, there was support for the suggestion that Member States should be asked to promote and protect human rights within their own borders, provided that the prerogatives of States were respected and no time-limit was set. Some members supported that suggestion in the working paper concerning international measures of implementation of human rights, but others were strongly of the view that it was no part of the Committee's task to deal with measures of implementation, a matter which was already under consideration by the competent bodies.

38. With reference to the third question, there was general agreement a review of the situation existing in the world with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights would be useful, particularly in connexion with other activities associated with the International Year for Human Rights; however, several members expressed doubts that a world conference was a good method of stock-taking. It was pointed out that the value of such a conference was yet to be demonstrated, and that its usefulness could not be evaluated until it was known what would be its agenda and its ultimate objective, and what costs would be involved. It was suggested by various members that the General Assembly could devote part of its 1968 session to reviewing the results achieved so far in the field of human rights and to establishing new goals for the future, and that other competent organs, such as the Economic and Social Council, could give special attention to questions relating to human rights in 1968; these members saw no reason why an international conference should be given the task of reviewing achievements in the field of human

rights and planning future programmes when that purpose could be achieved by simpler means having no financial implications.

39. With regard to the fourth question, several members of the Committee stressed the importance of educational activities as a means of promoting respect for and observance of human rights. It was suggested that every activity to be recommended by the Committee should have an educational component, and that the entire programme should be geared to creating, by 1968, a world-wide state of mind which would be less adverse than in 1965 to the idea of international protection of human rights. It was also suggested that universities and other institutions of higher learning should be drawn into United Nations efforts in the field of human rights, and in particular that an independent centre or autonomous institution for study and research in the field of human rights, which could draw upon the intellectual resources of the universities, and which might function along the lines of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, might be proposed. In addition, the importance of a systematic and widespread effort to give instruction in human rights, through seminars, conferences and other meetings, was stressed.

40. With regard to the future work of the Committee, several members expressed the view that attention should be concentrated on proposals and suggestions which received unanimous support. It was pointed out that if the Committee's proposals were not to be adopted unanimously, the question might arise whether the differences of opinion were confined to the activities and celebrations themselves or whether they extended to basic principles, a situation which might prejudice the promotion and protection of human rights. Once the Committee had reached a consensus on certain forms of celebration, it was added, it should study thoroughly how such celebrations should be organized.

41. At its ninth meeting, the Committee decided that a working group should be established to submit a report on the documentation and suggestions before the Committee, together with one or more draft resolutions for the Committee to discuss and approve. It was agreed that the working group should be able to call upon UNESCO for advice whenever it saw fit to do so. The Committee further decided to hold no further plenary meetings until after the working group had produced its report.

42. The Working Group, appointed by the Chairman and composed of the representatives of Costa Rica, Jamaica, the Philippines, Turkey, Uganda, USSR, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, met on several occasions between 23 October 1964 and 9 February 1965, and submitted its report (ST/SG/AC.5/5) to the Committee at its tenth meeting, held on 9 February 1965. The Committee also had before it a statement presented by the Secretary-General, on the financial implications of the report of the Working Group (ST/SG/AC.5/5/Add.1).

43. The report of the Working Group was divided into three parts. Part I contained a short introduction. Part II, which dealt with the programme of measures and activities, was divided into six sections, each consisting of a number of paragraphs and relating respectively to activities which would be organized by the United Nations, by Member States, by the specialized agencies and other international and national organizations, to the proposed international conference on human rights, and to co-ordinating machinery. The different sections represent a consensus of the opinions of the Working Group, except where there was a foot-note to the contrary. Section E, which included a proposal concerning an international conference on human rights, had been drawn up to serve as a basis for further discussion in the Committee. Lastly, in Part III, a draft resolution was presented for consideration and adoption by the Committee.

44. The Committee decided, at its tenth meeting, that it would examine Part I and sections A, B, C, D and F of Part II, paragraph by paragraph, and that a brief general debate should be held on section E of Part II. The Committee further decided, at its twelfth meeting, that the Committee would consider the various sections of the Working Group's report as draft recommendations, which the Committee would improve upon for inclusion in the present final report. It was agreed that the Committee, after examining the Working Group's report paragraph by paragraph, would try to come to a unanimous decision in each case.